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ABSTRACT

Guidelines selected from a policy statement adopted by the State Board of Education comprise the criteria for school site selection. The prerequisites pertain to size, utilities, safety, environmental factors, geographical and related factors, and site development. Forms are included for use by local school systems making preliminary determinations and for use by the School Site Approval Committee when making school site evaluations for official approval. (MLF)

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A GUIDE TO SCHOOL SITE SELECTION
REVISED 1976

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STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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OFFICE OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

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FOREWORD

In July, 1975 the State Board of Education adopted a policy concerning the selection of school sites (Reference Policy 40-4210).

The materials contained herein embody information and materials which have been developed in accordance with the provisions outlined in the executive procedure of the above referenced policy.

The form "Preliminary School Site Evaluation and School Site Approval", which is included, is designed for use by local school systems for making preliminary determinations as to the acceptability of school sites, and also for use by the School Site Approval Committee when making school site evaluations for official approval. Section VII of the form is to be used by the School Site Approval Committee for approval or disapproval of a site.

The form is available through the Office of School Administrative Services, State Department of Education.

Requests for site approval should be directed to Regional Director of Educational Services.

A GUIDE TO SCHOOL SITE SELECTION

A. A Good School Site is Important:

A good site, well developed, and a school plant functionally designed, with desirable environmental quality, and well equipped, leaves little to be desired in the way of basic physical tools for education. Without one or the other, the educational program may suffer. Current school programs include many activities that must be carried on outside the walls of the physical plant. Well planned and properly developed outdoor areas are essential to support outdoor activities, and to provide vehicular circulation and parking which is adequate, convenient and also conducive to the safety of children. The site is an integral part of the total school plant and may enhance or inhibit the achievement of a school's educational objectives.

Environment is a very influential factor in the lives of young children and growing boys and girls. For this reason, the school site should be such that it will contribute positively to the health, safety, and social aspects of the child's life at school.

Choosing a good site is one of the important early steps in overall planning. Success or failure in this initial step will be reflected in every subsequent stage in the development process.

For these reasons, the choice of a school site is of sufficient importance to require careful study. It also becomes clear that it is a problem requiring thorough and objective evaluation. Much thought should be given to certain basic principles involved in good site selection.

These principles, when studied in the light of their relation to the local situation, should provide a basis for the objective selection of the best site available. Undue consideration given to the value or the acquisition cost of a school site per se can be, and often has proved to be false economy.

B. Criteria For Selection of School Sites:

1. Size:

The acreage meets the minimum requirements of the State Board of Education with respect to size.

Elementary Schools - 5 Acres plus 1 acre for each 100 children in ADA.

Middle Schools - - 12 Acres plus 1 acre for each 100 children in ADA.

High Schools - - - 20 Acres plus 1 acre for each 100 students in ADA.

In highly developed areas slight deviations from minimum acreage may be made by the site approval committee, as considered appropriate.

Although minimum acreages are established, larger acreages are highly desirable. Also, those responsible for selecting sites must remain cognizant of the development limitations which may be imposed by certain physical factors within the scope of acreage being considered.

The size of the school may not be the only criterion affecting size. The possibility of expansion, anticipated community utilization of the school or area and the school program are other factors to be considered.

2. Utilities:

Utilities which are essential to the operation of a modern school plant must be available.

Electricity and Telephone:

These utilities are essential to the operation of a school plant and must be accessible to the proposed site.

Water and Sewerage:

The desirability of public water and sewerage service to a school site cannot be overemphasized. The cost of installing private systems, along with the continuing maintenance costs, plus environmental considerations all but eliminate consideration of private installations. Only in cases in which overriding circumstances prevail will site approval be granted at locations which cannot be served by public sewerage systems.

3. Safety Hazards:

The school site shall be relatively free of conditions and installations which would endanger the life, safety, and health of children.

No area shall be approved for a school site when any part of the area is traversed by high tension lines, high pressure oil or gas lines, railroads, or other hazardous installations or conditions.

No area shall be approved for a school site which is adjacent to an airport, nor which lies in the final approach or departure pattern for arriving and departing aircraft. The site should be located at a distance which is considered to be a reasonably safe distance from the arriving and departing flight pattern to avoid the probability of being endangered by falling aircraft. Also, the site should be far enough removed from airports and flight patterns to offer reasonable protection from interfering noise levels.

School sites shall be a reasonable distance from lakes and streams which, due to depth or other conditions, could be considered unsafe to children.

The approval of a site adjacent to heavily traveled streets and highways should be avoided.

School sites in locations subject to industrial pollution will be avoided.

4. Environmental Factors:

The school site should possess physically desirable characteristics and be so located that the surrounding area reflects characteristics which are conducive to the development of attitudes and responses in boys and girls considered to be socially, culturally and educationally desirable.

The selection of a school site located in an area zoned for commercial or industrial development should be avoided.

The location of a school should be such that it is insulated from business and industrial development, and such that children enroute to and from school will not be exposed to undesirable environmental and safety hazards.

The location of a school site should be one that is presumed to be acceptable to the school patronage community from the standpoint of general environmental surroundings and vehicular accessibility.

5. Geographical and Related Factors:

The school site should have such geographical location that it will provide convenient accessibility, be supportive to an efficient transportation system, accessible to community services needed by

the school, and appropriately located with respect to other schools and the population to be served.

6. Site Development:

The physical characteristics of the school site should be such that the cost of grading, drainage and development will be relatively low.

The evaluation of a site as it relates to physical development is a technical task, requiring the knowledge and experience of a qualified professional. The investment required to obtain a professional evaluation for physical development may result in considerable future savings.

PRELIMINARY SCHOOL SITE EVALUATION AND SCHOOL SITE APPROVAL

Sections I through VI of this form are designed for two purposes.

(1) For use by local systems when considering property for school sites.
(2) To provide the Site Approval Committee with essential data and information.

Section VII is to be used by the School Site Approval Committee for official approval of school sites.

School System _____ Superintendent _____

SECTION I: BASIC INFORMATION

Name of Proposed School	Proposed Grades	Approx. No. Students

No. of Instr. Units	☐ Complete School ☐ Designed for expansion	After Expansion eventual total units _____
Acreage _____	Clear title obtainable. ☐ Yes ☐ No	

SECTION II: UTILITIES AVAILABLE* RATING - ☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor

☐ Electricity Voltage ____ Phase ____	☐ Natural Gas ☐ Telephone	WATER ☐ Public ☐ Private	SEWERAGE ☐ Public ☐ Private

*Anticipate utilities will be available to the site by _____ (date).

(Private sewerage approval for site will be required from Environmental Protection Agency Water Quality Control.)

SECTION III: SAFETY HAZARDS ON, ACROSS, OR UNDESIRABLY NEAR SITE
RATING: ☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor

☐ High Tension Lines	☐ High Pressure Oil or Gas Lines	☐ Heavy Traffic Streets or Highways

☐ Railroads	☐ Airports	☐ Lakes or Rivers	☐ Industrial pollution

SECTION IV: ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS RATING - ☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor

AREA ZONED FOR	☐ Commercial ☐ Industrial ☐ Residental ☐ Other	TRAFFIC IN AREA	☐ Congested ☐ Heavy ☐ Light

COMMUNITY	☐ Industrial ☐ Business ☐ Residental ☐ Little Development	PROBABLE ACCEPTABILITY TO COMMUNITY	☐ Very Acceptable ☐ Moderately Acceptable ☐ Questionable

SECTION V: GEOGRAPHICAL & RELATED FACTORS RATING: ☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor

Location Describe: _____

TOPOGRAPHY * ☐ Steep ☐ Rolling ☐ Gently Sloping ☐ Flat	SOIL COVER * ☐ Wooded ☐ Cultivated ☐ Grassed ☐ Eroded	SURFACE CONDITION * ☐ Well drained ☐ Subject to overwash ☐ Poorly drained ☐ Gullied
☐ Attach Rough Plat of Site	Relationship to other schools & population: ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor	

*Check one or more as appropriate.

SECTION VI: *SITE DEVELOPMENT RATING: ☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor

GRADING FOR BUILDING ☐ Excessive ☐ Moderate ☐ Very Little	ROCK EXCAVATION ☐ Unlikely ☐ Not Excessive ☐ Excessive	DRAINAGE ☐ Easily Accomplished ☐ Simple System Required ☐ Moderate Grading & Drainage ☐ Elaborate System Required ☐ Excessive Grading & Drainage
PARKING AREAS ☐ Adequate Space ☐ Limited Space ☐ Inadequate Space	☐ Little Grading ☐ Moderate Grading ☐ Excessive Grading	VEHICULAR CIRCULATION ☐ Excellent Potential ☐ Development Restricted ☐ Development Difficult

Relative Cost - ☐ Average ☐ Moderate ☐ Excessive

LANDSCAPING

Maintenance Potential ☐ Excellent ☐ Some Problem ☐ Difficult

ATHLETIC AND RECREATION AREA DEVELOPMENT

Space - ☐ Adequate ☐ Limited ☐ Inadequate

Economic Factor ☐ Low ☐ Moderate ☐ Excessive

*Strongly recommend evaluation by professional architect or landscape architect.

SECTION VII: FOR USE BY SITE APPROVAL COMMITTEE

The preliminary site approval evaluation data on the above identified site submitted by the _____ School System has been reviewed by the committee. The site was visited by the committee on _____ (day) _____ (month) _____ (year).

We hereby certify that this site meets the criteria for the selection of school sites as approved by the State Board of Education and the State Department of Human Resources.

_____ Director, Educational Regional Services

_____ State Board Member

_____ Representative, State Department of Human Resources

We hereby disapprove this site in that it does not adequately meet the criteria for the selection of school sites as approved by the State Board of Education and the State Department of Human Resources.

_____ Director, Educational Regional Services

_____ State Board Member

_____ Representative, State Department of Human Resources

Remarks: _____

_____

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NOTE: One copy of Site Approval (including Sections I-VII) must be furnished the School Plant Services Unit prior to approval of plans for a building to be constructed on the site.

The committee is authorized to request additional information on any criteria (section) when, in the judgment of the committee, additional information is needed.